

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BEIRUT 04118 211157Z
ACTION SS-25

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 4118

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PGOV, LE
SUBJECT: SYRIA AND THE FRANGIEHS

1. WELL-PLACED MEMBER OF BOULOS FAMILY OF ZGHORTA-EHDAN HAS GIVEN ME FOLLOWING DETAILS OF INTEREST REGARDING SYRIANS AND FRANGIEHS.

2. HE WAS TOLD BY KHADDAM WHEN LATTER CAME ON CONDOLENCE CALL TO ZGHORTA THAT HE HAD INFORMED SULEIMAN FRANGIEH AND OTHER ZGHORTA LEADERS SARKIS MUST TAKE FIRM STAND AGAINST CHRISTIAN MILITIAS OR HE WAS LOST. WHEN SARKIS LATER INDICATED HE INTENDED TO RESIGN, SYRIANS HAD SHRUGGED SHOULDERS. FRANGIEH, ON LEARNING OF SYRIAN ATTITUDE, HAD CALLED HAFEZ AL-ASAD AND ASKED HIM, AS PERSONAL FAVOR, TO CALL SARKIS AND ASK HIM TO STAY ON, OTHERWISE THERE WOULD BE CHAOS IN LEBANON. ASAD HAD AGREED AND THEN DELEGATED TASK TO SUBORDINATE. WHEN INFORMED OF THIS BY RENE MUAWWAD, WHO WAS AT PALACE, FRANGIEH HAD CALLED ASAD AGAIN AND ASKED HIM TO CALL PERSONALLY. ASAD DID SO BUT WITH APPARENT LACK OF ENTHUSIASM OR CONVICTION.
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PAGE 02 BEIRUT 04118 211157Z

3. SYRIANS HAD INFORMED FRANGIEH HE WAS THEIR CHOICE AS SUCCESSOR TO SARKIS. FRANGIEH HAD REPLIED THAT WAS CONSTITUTIONALLY IMPOSSIBLE AND HE WAS SO ALIENATED FROM PHALANGE, WHO REPRESENTED PERHAPS THREE-FOURTHS OF MARONITES, THAT HE COULD NOT GOVERN.

4. FRANGIEH HAD SAID THAT ALTHOUGH HE WAS BEHOLDEN TO SYRIANS, HE THOUGHT DEBT HAD BEEN WIPED OUT BY TWO DISFAVORS THEY HAD DONE HIM. FIRST WAS MASSACRE OF GREEK CATHOLICS IN BEKAA, AND SECOND WAS SHELLING OF BEIRUT. THIS HAD NOT ONLY DISTRACTED ATTENTION FROM EHDEN MASSACRE, BUT HAD LED MANY LEBANESE TO ASSUME FRANGIEH HIMSELF WAS BEHIND THESE INCIDENTS. FRANGIEH HAD PATIENTLY EXPLAINED TO SYRIANS THAT THIS WAS NO WAY TO MAKE FRIENDS AND INFLUENCE PEOPLE, BUT SYRIANS WERE SLOW LEARNERS.

5. ACCORDING HIM, FRANGIEH PLANNING POLITICAL RATHER THAN PERSONAL REVENGE AGAINST GEMAYELS FOR EHDEN MASSACRE. HE IS GOING TO ATTACK KATAEB INSTALLATIONS AND PARTY FORMATIONS.
PARKER

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NNN

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